

FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK NO. 95
PAUL FRANCUCH

AUGUST 25, 1976

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO SMALL TOWN AMERICA? (THE PUBLIC INTEREST)

HOW PLOWLESS FARMING SAVES THE SOIL (BUSINESS WEEK)

JET LAG ISN'T JUST A STATE OF MIND (FORTUNE)

ANNCR: HERE IS -----, WITH FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK, A REVIEW OF ARTICLES OF TIMELY TOPICS FROM MAGAZINES PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, ON MAN'S OPINION ON HOW SOME OF THE MASS MEDIA PORTRAYS "SMALL-TOWN AMERICA," FROM THE PAGES OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST; WORD ON HOW A NEW TECHNIQUE MAY REVOLUTIONIZE FARMING FROM BUSINESS WEEK; AND A LOOK AT A COMMON AFFLICTION OF LONG-DISTANCE JET TRAVELERS IN FORTUNE MAGAZINE.

EDITOR: FOLLOWING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S SELECTION OF JIMMY CARTER AS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, ATTENTION HAS FOCUSED ON SMALL-TOWN AMERICA. JOURNALISTS HAVE SENT THEIR EDITORS REAMS OF COPY ABOUT CARTER'S HOME TOWN OF PLAINS, GEORGIA. WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT PLAINS IS GENERALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF SMALL-TOWN AMERICA. ALL THE PEOPLE SEEM TO KNOW EACH OTHER, THEY TEND TO BE SELF-RELIANT, AND THEY LIVE IN A SPACIOUS ENVIRONMENT RELATIVELY FREE OF TRAFFIC PROBLEMS OR POLLUTION. LIVING IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA IS EASIER THAN LIVING IN A BIG CITY. THINGS SEEM TO BE LESS COMPLICATED AND WHAT PEOPLE LACK IN SOPHISTICATION THEY MAKE UP FOR WITH A SPECIAL BRAND OF COUNTRY CHARM.

YET FOR THE REGULAR VIEWER OF AMERICAN TELEVISION OR FEATURE-LENGTH HOLLYWOOD FILMS, SMALL-TOWN AMERICA OFTEN APPEARS AS A PRIME CANDIDATE FOR THE TITLE OF MOST WICKED PLACE ON EARTH.

EDITOR:
(CONT'D)

THAT'S THE ASSESSMENT OF BENJAMIN STEIN, WRITING IN THE SCHOLARLY QUARTERLY, THE PUBLIC INTEREST. THE FICTION-WRITER'S ATTITUDE IS THE PRODUCT OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. IN EARLIER TIMES, SMALL-TOWN AMERICA WAS DESCRIBED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN VIRTUOUS TERMS. IT WAS THE CROWDED AND DIRTY CITIES WHICH WERE PAINTED IN UNCOMPLIMENTARY TERMS.

STEIN BELIEVES THE FICTION-WRITERS' TENDENCY TO DENIGRATE SMALL TOWNS IN TELEVISION AND FILMS IS THE PRODUCT OF MINDS DEVELOPED IN THE BIG CITIES ALONG THE EAST COAST. THE ATTACKS FOLLOW A CONSISTENT THEME:

VOICE: "IN THE TELEVISED AND FILM LITERATURE OF AMERICA, SMALL TOWNS ARE NOW THE PLACES WHERE BAD THINGS HAPPEN; THE INNOCENT WAYFARER RETURNS TO THE CITY FOR PROTECTION. IT IS MORE OR LESS ROUTINE ON TELEVISION FOR NAIVE FAMILIES TO HAVE A TIRE BLOWOUT OUTSIDE A SMALL TOWN AND COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR INTO THE MAW OF A TOWN-WIDE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY. THE SMALL TOWNS OF THE MOVIES ARE NO BETTER. INNOCENT YOUTHS RIDE THROUGH THEM ONLY TO BE DRIVEN OFF MOUNTAIN ROADS, OR BLOWN TO PIECES BY CRAZED LOCAL SHERIFFS."

EDITOR: STEIN THEORIZES THAT HOLLYWOOD'S SCRIPT WRITERS SECRETLY RESENT THESE SELF-RELIANT COUNTRY PEOPLE -- THESE PEOPLE WHO CAN FIX A FLAT TIRE THEMSELVES! SCRIPT WRITERS SEE SMALL TOWNS AS BACKWARD, HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THE RESIDENTS ARE OFTEN NARROW-MINDED AND RACIST. HE WRITES:

VOICE: "THESE WRITERS' FORMATIVE YEARS WERE SPENT READING ABOUT LYNCHINGS IN SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS. THEY KNOW THAT ONCE THEY LEAVE NEW YORK OR LOS ANGELES, THEY ARE IN

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

POLITICAL TERRA INCOGNITA (UNKNOWN TERRITORY), AND THAT SCARES THEM. WHEN THEY DEPICT A SMALL TOWN AS FRIGHTENING, THEY ARE REALLY TELLING US THAT THEY ARE FRIGHTENED."

EDITOR: THESE IMAGES RUN COUNTER TO THE PICTURE PAINTED BY FINDINGS FROM A 1975 GALLUP PUBLIC-OPINION POLL. THREE OUT OF FOUR AMERICANS RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY SAID THEY PREFER SUBURBAN, COUNTRY OR FARM LIVING OVER THE BIG CITIES. STEIN BELIEVES MOST AMERICANS STILL YEARN TO LIVE IN A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN, DESPITE THE FICTION ON TELEVISION AND MOVIE SCREENS. BUT IN THE LAND OF MASS COMMUNICATION, THE WINDS OF CHANGE ARE BLOWING. STEIN NOTES:

VOICE: "SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, SOMEONE DISCOVERED THAT THE HATRED OF SMALL TOWNS COLLIDED WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL (ECOLOGY) ISSUE. SUDDENLY, FOR THE GROUPS WHOSE PARENTS WERE TAUGHT THAT EVERYTHING OUTSIDE THE CITY WAS THE DOMAIN OF THE (RACIST) KLANSMAN, THE CITY AND THE POLLUTION NOW BECAME THE ENEMY.

"A NEW GENERATION OF AD MEN AND WOMEN AND MUSIC HUCKSTERS HAVE COME ALONG WHO REALIZE THAT WHEN YOU CALL SOMETHING 'COUNTRY' OR 'FARM-FRESH' OR 'NATURAL,' PEOPLE THINK OF IT AS LACKING POLLUTANTS AND ADDITIVES. /ON THE SAME TELEVISION

SHOW WHERE THE SMALL TOWN IS CRUELY TRAPPING THE INNOCENT CITY DWELLER, THE COMMERCIALS ARE SHOWING HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO LIVE ON A FARM AND GET FRESH FOOD AND HAVE A FRESH COMPLEXION, AND HOW HEALTHFUL IT IS TO LIVE IN A SMALL TOWN WHERE THERE IS PLENTY OF FRESH AIR AND HARD WORK.

PEOPLE HAVE BEGUN TO THINK THAT OUT IN THE COUNTRY, THERE

O
P
T
↓

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

↑
ARE NOT ONLY FEWER SULPHUR-DIOXIDE EMISSIONS, BUT THERE IS
ALSO LESS MEANNESS AND TENSION." /

EDITOR:

OR
SUBTLE CHANGES IN THE MASS MEDIA ARE ALREADY APPARENT.
MORE AND MORE AMERICAN RADIO STATIONS IN BIG CITIES AND
SMALL TOWNS ALIKE ARE FEATURING NOTHING BUT COUNTRY AND
WESTERN MUSIC. SOME OF AMERICA'S POPULAR NEW TELEVISION
SHOWS ARE PORTRAYING SMALL-TOWN AMERICA IN A POSITIVE LIGHT.
BUT BENJAMIN STEIN CONCLUDES HIS ARTICLE IN PUBLIC INTEREST
BY NOTING THAT IT WILL PROBABLY BE SOME TIME BEFORE MOST
TELEVISION PROGRAMS PRESENT A REALLY POSITIVE IMAGE OF
SMALL-TOWN AMERICA.

-0-

EDITOR: FOR THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, FARMERS AROUND THE UNITED STATES
HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH WHAT IS CALLED "MINIMUM TILLAGE"
OR "CONSERVATION TILLING." BUSINESS WEEK MAGAZINE SAYS
MINIMUM TILLAGE, NOW PRACTICED BY ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF
AMERICA'S FARMS, MAY BECOME STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
FOR ALMOST THE ENTIRE COUNTRY BY THE YEAR 2000.

MINIMUM TILLAGE LEAVES A PROTECTIVE BLANKET OF STUBBLE
ON THE FIELD TO GUARD AGAINST THE HARMFUL EROSION WHICH ROBS
AMERICAN FARMLANDS OF SOME THREE THOUSAND MILLION METRIC
TONS OF TOPSOIL EVERY YEAR.

THE MAGAZINE ADDS:

VOICE: "BESIDES CONSERVING VALUABLE TOPSOIL, MINIMUM TILLAGE OFFERS
TWO BIG ADVANTAGES TO FARMERS. IT INCREASES THEIR
PRODUCTIVITY -- REDUCING BY TWENTY PERCENT THE TIME THEY

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

HAVE TO SPEND PREPARING THEIR FIELDS FOR PLANTING. AND
(IT IS ESTIMATED THAT) IT CAN CUT FUEL BILLS IN HALF.
IT'S MAIN DRAWBACKS ARE THAT IT CANNOT BE USED ON ALL CROPS
OR IN ALL TYPES OF SOIL."

EDITOR: CORN AND SOYBEANS ARE EXAMPLES OF CROPS WHICH FARE WELL WITH
MINIMUM TILLAGE, BUT THE PROCESS IS IMPRACTICAL WHEN GROWING
COTTON, FOR EXAMPLE. THICK, OR SOILS HEAVY WITH CLAY WILL
NOT WORK.

PLOWS ARE ELIMINATED IN MINIMUM TILLAGE AND CROPS GROW IN
FIELDS CHOKED WITH WEEDS. BUSINESS WEEK DESCRIBES THE
FARMER'S JOB:

VOICE: "SOME SIMPLY USE DISK HARROWS TO CHOP UP THE STUBBLE, THEN
FOLLOW WITH SEEDERS. OTHERS PREFER A 'CHISEL PLOW' -- A
LONG SET OF TEETH THAT CUTS THIN SLOTS IN THE GROUND. /ONE
OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED NO-TILLAGE MACHINES IS MADE BY
ALLIS-CHALMERS AND DOES THE ENTIRE TILLING AND PLANTING JOB
(DRAWING). /SOMETIMES HERBICIDES, INSECTICIDES, AND
FERTILIZERS CAN BE APPLIED AT THE SAME TIME THE SEED IS
PLANTED."

EDITOR: WHAT OTHER ADVANTAGES DOES MINIMUM TILLAGE OFFER? BUSINESS
WEEK CITES THE SUCCESS OF A FORMER UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
AGRONOMIST, HARRY YOUNG, JUNIOR:

VOICE: "FARMERS ARE ALSO FINDING THAT MINIMUM TILLAGE MEANS EASIER
'DOUBLE CROPPING' ON THE SAME LAND. (HARRY) YOUNG, FOR
EXAMPLE, PLANTS A SOYBEAN CROP AFTER HARVESTING HIS WHEAT,
AND HE SAYS, 'WITH DOUBLE-CROPPING, I USUALLY HAVE THE

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

OP
T

↑
SOYBEAN PLANTERS IN THE FIELD AT THE SAME TIME AS THE
HARVESTING COMBINES ARE WORKING.' WITH THIS TECHNIQUE,
YOUNG CLAIMS THAT HE GET A FIFTY PERCENT INCREASE IN OUTPUT
COMPARED WITH CONVENTIONAL TILLAGE, FOR THE SAME COST."

EDITOR: MINIMUM TILLAGES DOES HAVE PROBLEMS, THOUGH. FARMERS WHO
ADOPT THIS MODERN TECHNIQUE HAVE TO MANAGE THEIR LAND MUCH
MORE CAREFULLY. FOR EXAMPLE, SOIL MOISTURE CONTENT MUST BE
CAREFULLY CHECKED BEFORE TILLAGE. IF THE SOIL IS TOO WET
IT WILL NOT FLOW EASILY AROUND THE TILLER AND THE SEED WILL
NOT BE IMPLANTED. MINIMUM TILLAGE ALSO REQUIRES HIGHER
EQUIPMENT OUTLAYS WITH COSTS RUNNING AS MUCH AS FIFTY
PERCENT MORE THAN CONVENTIONAL EQUIPMENT. FINALLY, THERE'S
THE PROBLEM OF INCREASED USE OF HERBICIDES -- AN ENVIRONMENTAL
DANGER, AND VERY RISKY.

BUSINESS WEEK CONCLUDES, HOWEVER, THAT BECAUSE OF THE
TREMENDOUS GAINS TO BE HAD FROM MINIMUM TILLAGE, ADVOCATES
OF THE PROCESS BELIEVE THE INCREASED USE OF HERBICIDES IS
WORTH THE RISK.

-0-

EDITOR: AT ANY GIVEN TIME OF DAY, THE WORLD'S SKY IS FILLED WITH
ABOUT ONE MILLION PEOPLE FLYING FROM ONE POINT TO ANOTHER.
THIS IS THE JET AGE ... MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE BECOMING
PART OF THE JET SET ... AND MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE BEING
AFFLICTED BY WHAT'S BECOME KNOWN AS "JET LAG."

AND IT'S NOT JUST PSYCHOLOGICAL, WRITES JOURNALIST ROY
ROWAN IN THE CURRENT EDITION OF FORTUNE:

VOICE: "THE PROBLEM IS PHYSICAL. BASICALLY IT STEMS FROM CERTAIN INNERT CYCLICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY THAT TEND TO RESIST BEING RESET, FROM THE DIURNAL (SUN LIGHT-ACTIVE) NATURE OF MAN, AND FROM THE UNASSAILABLE FACT THAT, AS LONG AS THE WORLD GOES AROUND, NIGHT IS DAY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT."

EDITOR: WHO IS AFFECTED BY JET LAG? PRACTICALLY EVERYONE WHO TRAVELS BY JET ACROSS SEVERAL TIME ZONES IN A SINGLE FLIGHT. INFANTS UNDER THREE MONTHS, ON AN EATING AND SLEEPING MINICYCLE DIFFERENT FROM THEIR ELDERS, DON'T SEEM TO FEEL THE EFFECT. NOR DO PEOPLE WHO FLY AT SPEEDS LESS THAN 640 KILOMETERS PER HOUR. AND PEOPLE WHO FLY EAST AND WEST -- CROSSING THE TIME ZONES -- SUFFER FROM JET LAG MORE FREQUENTLY THAN THOSE FLYING NORTH AND SOUTH. /THIS

O
P
T
MISMATCH IN BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RHYTHMS, SAYS
ROMAN, CAUSES WHAT SCIENTISTS CALL "DESYNCHRONOSIS."

HE WRITES:

VOICE: "THE COMPLICATIONS OF JET LAG ARISE FROM THE RHYTHMICAL NATURE OF MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT. JUST AS THE UNIVERSE IS IN CONSTANT CYCLICAL MOTION, SO ARE THE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF LIFE, RIGHT DOWN TO THE ATOM, IN WHICH ELECTRONS ARE ORBITING A NUCLEUS AT TREMENDOUS SPEEDS. /PRACTICALLY ALL LIFE PROCESSES SHOW CYCLES OF

O
P
T
TWO TYPES: THOSE DEPENDENT ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT (THE WAY PLANT GROWTH IS AFFECTED BY TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL), CALLED EXOGENOUS CYCLES, AND THOSE ORIGINATING INTERNALLY (SUCH AS THE HUMAN HEARTBEAT), CALLED ENDOGENOUS CYCLES. /

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

"THE MOST FAMILIAR CYCLE IS THE ONE ASSOCIATED WITH THE EARTH'S TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR AXIAL ROTATION, THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM. /IT IS NEITHER IMPOSED NOR ACQUIRED, BUT MANIFESTS ITSELF SPONTANEOUSLY AS AN ENDOGENOUS CYCLE. YET/THE CIRCADIAN CYCLE IS ALSO SYNCHRONIZED BY CERTAIN EXTERNAL CUES SUCH AS LIGHT AND DARKNESS AND THE POWERFUL ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD OF THE SUN."

EDITOR: AFTER JETTING FROM DAYLIGHT TO NIGHT, THE CIRCADIAN CYCLE BECOMES SUBJECTED TO FAULTY EXTERNAL CUES -- AND THAT DISTURBS BODY CHEMISTRY. THE HUMAN SYSTEM, HOWEVER, SEEKS A NEW EQUILIBRIUM SOONER OR LATER. BUT IT MAY TAKE SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE BODY'S VARIOUS BIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS ARE BACK ON A REGULAR COORDINATED CYCLE.

AS IF PROBLEMS WITH THE CIRCADIAN CYCLE WERE NOT ENOUGH FOR THE TRAVELER, THERE ARE ALSO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ON BOARD THE PLANE. IT HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN THAT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE FAR MORE POTENT AT HIGH ALTITUDES. COMBINE THAT WITH CIGARETTE SMOKE, SAYS ROWAN, AND YOU'RE REALLY LOOKING FOR TROUBLE:

VOICE:

"IN EARLY PLANES THERE WAS A PROBLEM OF MONOXIDE POISONING FROM ENGINE EXHAUST. JET ENGINES AND PRESSURIZED CABINS HAVE ELIMINATED THIS DANGER. TODAY CIGARETTE SMOKE IS THE CHIEF SOURCE OF TROUBLESOME GAS IN PLANES. ESPECIALLY WHEN COUPLED WITH ALTITUDE, IT CAN SUFFICIENTLY INACTIVATE A JET PASSENGER'S HEMOGLOBIN TO PRODUCE TEMPORARY ANEMIA. IN ANY CASE, THE CHRONIC SMOKER WILL FEEL AS IF HE IS FLYING AT TWICE THE ALTITUDE OF MOST PRESSURIZED CABINS. PILOTS

VOICE:
(CONT'D)

REPORT THEY ARE LESS FATIGUED AFTER LONG FLIGHTS IF THEY
DO NOT SMOKE."

EDITOR:

ALL IN ALL, HOWEVER, FLYING IS A GENERALLY PLEASURABLE
EXPERIENCE. TO CALL JET LAG "PAINFUL" WOULD BE
STRETCHING THE DEFINITION. UNCOMFORTABLE YES, PAINFUL

NO. / ROWAN SAYS IN HIS FORTUNE ARTICLE THAT SOME BUSINESS

EXECUTIVES FREQUENTLY FIND THAT BY KEEPING THEIR WATCHES
SET AT THEIR HOME TIME, OR AT THE TIME OF THE PLACE MIDPOINT
IN THEIR FLIGHT, THE EFFECTS OF JET LAG ARE MINIMIZED. IT
HELPS KEEP THEIR HOUR-BY-HOUR ORIENTATION TO THE WORLD
CONSTANT. IT HAS ALSO BEEN DISCOVERED THAT PEOPLE WHO
TRAVEL IN PAIRS OR GROUPS ARE LESS BOTHERED BY JET LAG.

ROY ROWAN CONCLUDES HIS ARTICLE IN FORTUNE WITH NEWS THAT,
ALTHOUGH NO MEDICATION PRESENTLY EXISTS TO SHIFT CIRCADIAN
RHYTHMS OVER TO DESTINATION TIMES, THERE ARE SOME DRUGS
IN THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE WHICH MAY DO THE TRICK. SCIENTISTS
ARE ALSO STUDYING THE JET LAG EFFECTS OF FOOD ON PEOPLE WHO
EAT WHILE FLYING.

SO WHAT IS THE MOST IMMEDIATE SOLUTION FOR COMBATTING JET
LAG? ROWAN SAYS FOR THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD IT THERE IS THE
SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT. IT FLIES AT TWICE THE SPEED OF SOUND
AND CAN JET A PERSON SEVERAL THOUSAND KILOMETERS BACK AND
FORTH IN A SINGLE DAY. THIS REDUCES FATIGUE AND DOESN'T
THROW BODY RHYTHMS OUT OF KILTER. BUT THERE'S A LIMIT TO
HOW MUCH HIGH-ALTITUDE RAPID TRAVEL A PERSON CAN TAKE.
EXPERTS CITE THE SST TRAVEL FIGURE LIMIT AT THE EQUIVALENT
OF SIXTY-ONE TRANSATLANTIC ROUND TRIPS A YEAR. BECAUSE

EDITOR: AFTER THAT, YOU'RE THREATENED BY OVEREXPOSURE TO
(CONT'D) GALACTIC RADIATION.

AND THAT'S ANOTHER STORY ... QUITE POSSIBLY THE TOPIC FOR
SOME FUTURE EDITION OF FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK.

-0-

ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK, SUMMARIES OF
ARTICLES FROM MAGAZINES PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY
YOU HEARD ABOUT HOW SOME OF THE MASS MEDIA PORTRAYS "SMALL-
TOWN AMERICA," FROM THE QUARTERLY THE PUBLIC INTEREST; AN
EXAMINATION OF MINIMUM TILLAGE PLANTING, FROM THE PAGES OF
BUSINESS WEEK; AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF "JET LAG"
FROM FORTUNE MAGAZINE. JOIN US AGAIN (NEXT TIME) FOR MORE
SELECTIONS FROM THE MAGAZINE RACK. THIS IS -----.

-0-

WJL/CAK